Follow diligently the Way in your own heart, but make no display of it to the world.
—*Tao Te King*

THEOSOPHY

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WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

THERE are elements of paradox—paradox from the intellectual point of view—in the explanations of the nature of Theosophy found in the writings of H.P.B. In her first article on the subject in the *Theosophist,* after rejecting the misconceptions evident in the dictionary definitions of that day, she wrote:

> Vaughan offers a far better, more philosophical definition. "A Theosophist," he says—"is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis." In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own opinions.

This general view is taken up again in "What are the Theosophists?", where H.P.B. describes the "platform" of the Theosophical Society:

> As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature whether materialists—those who find in matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," or spiritualists—that is, those who discover in spirit the source of all energy and of matter as well, were and are, properly, Theosophists. For to be one, one need not necessarily recognize the existence of any special God or a deity. One need but worship the spirit of living nature, and try to identify oneself with it. To revere that *Presence,* the invisible Cause, which is yet ever manifesting itself in its incessant results; the intangible, omnipotent, and omnipresent Proteus: indivis-

> ible in its Essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there, and everywhere and nowhere; is ALL and NOTHING; ubiquitous yet one; the Essence filling, binding, bounding, containing everything; contained in all. It will, we think, be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists, such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.

This account stresses the radical independence and self-reliance of the inquirer. Had there been then, or were there now, a true conception of the self abroad in the world, no more might need to have been added, yet we know that a great deal was added by H.P.B. in her explanation of the nature of Theosophy. In the article "Is Theosophy a Religion?", after considering the inadequacy and contradictions of Spiritualist doctrines, she says:

> No true theosophist will ever laugh, or far less rejoice, at the discomfiture even of an opponent. The reason for it is simple:—
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> *Because we know that beings from other, higher worlds do confabulate with some elect mortals now as ever;* though *now* far more rarely than in the days of old, as mankind becomes with every civilized generation worse in every respect. . . . Meanwhile, an humble servant of Theosophy, the Editor, declares once more her belief in Beings, grander, wiser, nobler than any *personal* God, who . . . *do* condescend in all and every age to occasionally overshadow rare sensitives—often entirely unconnected with Church, Spiritualism or even Theosophy. . . . There is not a religion worthy of the name which has been started otherwise than in consequence of such *visits* from Beings on higher planes.

What, then, happens to the truths imparted by this means? An explanation of the confusion which eventually overtakes all such religio-philosophical "revelations" should begin with a characterization of the class of beings to which the Teachers belong. In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 167), it is said:

> The Sons of Wisdom, or the *spiritual* Dhyanis, had become "intellectual" through their contact with matter, because they had already reached, during previous cycles of incarnation, that degree of intellect which enabled them to become independent and self-conscious entities *on this plane* of matter.

What such beings taught became the great religions of mankind. But those whom they taught were still involved in the illusions of

embodied existence on this plane of matter, and in the case of inspiration, certain consequences were inevitable. Of the religions so inspired, H.P.B. says:

> All are true at the bottom, and all are false on their surface. The Revealer, the artist who impressed a portion of the Truth on the brain of the Seer, was in every instance a true artist, who gave out genuine truths; but the instrument proved also, in every instance, to be *only a man.* Invite Rubenstein and ask him to play a sonata of Beethoven on a piano left to *self-tuning,* one half of the keys of which are in chronic paralysis, while the wires hang loose; then see whether, the genius of the artist notwithstanding, you will be able to recognize the sonata. The moral of the *fabula* is that a man—let him be the greatest of mediums or natural Seers—is but a man; and man left to his own devices and speculations *must* be out of tune with absolute truth, while even picking up some of its crumbs. For Man is but a *fallen* Angel, a god within, but having an animal brain in his head, more subject to cold and wine fumes while in company with other men on Earth, than to the faultless reception of divine revelations.

Hence, H.P.B. says, the multi-colored dogmas of the churches, and all the contradictory "insights" and partisan theories which divide and separate the faithful and believing portion of mankind. Hence, also, she adds, the "personal vanity and self-opinionatedness" of those who believe that they have had an inspiration of some sort, and from this often genuine feeling go on to imagine that their inward perceptions are infallible and that they know all that can be known!

What then of the Theosophy of H.P.B.? She also gives a *third* perspective on the character of Theosophy—a view which, while rejecting "infallibility," indicates the safeguards against self-delusion instituted by its Teachers:

> Will our critics imagine that we exclude theosophical teachings from this nomenclature? Not at all. And though the esoteric doctrines which our Society has been and is expounding, are not *mental* or *spiritual* impressions from some "unknown, *from above,*" but the fruit of teachings given to us by living men, still, except that which was dictated and written out by those Masters of Wisdom themselves, these doctrines may be in many cases as incomplete and faulty as any of our foes would desire it. The "Secret Doctrine"—a work which gives out all that can be given out during this century, is an attempt to lay bare *in part* the common foundation and inheritance of all—great and small religious and philosophical schemes.

We may note, here, that the "incompleteness" H.P.B. so readily admits does not result from lack of knowledge on the part of these Teachers, but from the limitations of the age in which they teach.

There are, then, at least three processes involved in the realization of Theosophy. There is the search with an "inspiration of one's own," there is the possibility of inspiration—however slight—from higher planes, and there is study of the recorded teachings of great beings, conveyed directly without the distortions and colorings of psychic intermediaries. It seems clear that the counsels of the devotional books represent the synthesis of these processes, and that the three may be welded into one by the student through a realizing sense of the first great object of the Theosophical Movement—Universal Brotherhood. After all, the highest "inspiration of one's own" is hardly a personal achievement, but draws, when genuine, from that level of unity where there is no distinction among various "selves." Nor could vanity or self-assertion confine the growing awareness earned by application of the heart doctrine for anyone who realizes that the one power that the disciple should covet is to appear as nothing in the eyes of men. Finally, fidelity to what has been transmitted, by the means of which H.P.B. speaks, is the contemporary application of the verse: "Those who in humbleness have garnered low confess, 'Thus have I heard'."

Theosophists are today on the eve of a vast swelling of the cycle of awakening, in which all three of these processes will no doubt gain intensification and acceleration. The processes will not change in character; the laws of their working will continue to apply; and the responsibilities of students will remain exactly the same, in due proportion. And through balance, renewed effort, and watchful observation, students may have extraordinary opportunity to learn from the very confusions of the time, from the first stirrings of the new awakening of the cycle. We are given general clues as to what those stirrings may be like, especially in H.P.B.'s Five Messages. And there are further suggestions in certain of her great articles, as, for example, in "The Tidal Wave," where she speaks of the turbulence and struggle of the cycle of awakening in the last century, described as a "great psychic and spiritual change now taking place in the realm of the human soul." It should be remembered, here, that H.P.B.'s vision encompassed the plane of causes, and that she saw deep significances where others might see nothing at all. However, of the outward aspect of what was then going on, she said:

> . . . the great change is not effected in solemn silence, nor is it perceived only by the very few. On the contrary, it asserts itself amid a loud din of busy, boisterous tongues, a clash of public opinion, in comparison to which the incessant, ever increasing roar even of the noisiest political agitation seems like the rustling of the young forest foliage, on a warm spring day.

Writing prophetically, in terms which surely have application to the present as well as the past, she said:

> If the signs of the times can be trusted, it is not the *Animalists* who will remain conquerors. This is warranted us by the many brave and prolific authors and writers who have arisen of late to defend the rights of Spirit to reign over matter. Many are the honest, aspiring Souls now raising themselves like a dead wall against the torrent of the muddy waters of Materialism. And facing the hitherto domineering flood which is still carrying off into unknown abysses the fragments from the wreck of the dethroned, cast down Human Spirit, they now command: "So far hast thou come; but thou shalt go no farther!"

We may see renewing aspects of this promise in the struggles of youth in the present, and in the cry for higher vision from rare men in every calling, yet the wave in its totality is so variously combined with the froth and fragments of past beliefs and assertions that it is now quite hazardous to try to identify the constructive currents, save in a few, unmistakable instances. It is as though one were to attempt to single out the true from the false or diluted teachings of the innumerable sects to which *Isis Unveiled* gives minute attention, and to do this without the guiding light so carefully provided by H.P.B. The truth, we may think, is often somehow there, because we *feel* it, but how can we tell just *where?* And even with her help, in the case of the *Isis* commentary, we are moved mainly to gratitude for the clarifying and unifying teachings given later in *The Secret Doctrine,* putting the archaic philosophy in the language of our times. This is done much as Mr. Judge explains in his "Synthesis of Occult Science."

But there is nonetheless a touchstone of identification provided by H.P.B., by which we may attempt to recognize some of the best expressions of the coming cycle:

> It is not the fanatics of the dead letter in general, nor the iconoclasts and Vandals who fight the new Spirit of thought, . . . who will ever become the protectors and Saviours of the now resurrecting human thought and Spirit. . . . It is not for them that the hour of the new historical era will have struck, but for those

> who will have learnt to express and put into practice the aspirations as well as the physical needs of the rising generations and of the now trampled-down masses. In order that one should fully comprehend *individual* life with its physiological, psychic and spiritual mysteries, he has to devote himself with all the fervor of unselfish philanthropy and love for his brother men, to studying and knowing *collective* life, or Mankind. Without preconceptions or prejudice, as also without the least fear of possible results in one or another direction, he has to decipher, understand and *remember* the deep and innermost feelings and the aspirations of the poor people's great and suffering heart. To do this he has first "to attune his soul with that of Humanity," as the old philosophy teaches; to thoroughly master the correct meaning of every line and word in the rapidly turning pages of the Book of Life of MANKIND and to be thoroughly saturated with the truism that the latter is a whole inseparable from his own SELF.

Commenting, H.P.B. adds: "Few indeed are such; for they are the rare blossoms of the age, and generally the martyrs to prejudiced mobs and time-servers." She goes on, in this article, to give some examples of writers who might qualify as reaching out in this direction. And one may think that in years soon to come there will be others of like stature—men to whom H.P.B.'s words will clearly apply: "Of course we do not mean authors alone, but rather the practical and still unrecognized, though well known, philanthropists and altruists of our age; the people's friends, the unselfish lovers of man, and the defenders of human right to the freedom of Spirit."

ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING REINCARNATION

WHAT are your proofs?" is often asked of those who believe in reincarnation and karma, and who think that evolution demands a place in the cosmos for Mahatmas (or great souls) as facts and ideals. "If you cannot prove reincarnation just as you would a fact in a court of law, I will not believe," says one, while another says, "Make such objective demonstrations as science does, and then you may expect me to agree with you." But in truth all these objectors accept as proven many things which on a slight examination are seen to rest as much on theory and metaphysical argument as do any of these doctrines. The axioms of mathematics are unprovable; the very word assumes that they have to be accepted. Being accepted, we go forward and on the basis of their unproved truth demonstrate other and succedent matters.

The sun is the apparent source of energy, and is confidently supposed by many to be a mass of burning material. No one, however, knows this to be so. No one was ever there, and the whole set of theories regarding the luminary rests on assumptions. Many natural facts are against some of the theories. The great fact that the higher the mountain the more cold it is on top would be one, not wholly accounted for by theories as to radiation. And when we remember the great, the immense, difference between the various scientific estimates of the sun's heat, doubt increases. Seeing that electricity is now so much better known, and that it is apparently all-pervading, the ancient idea that the sun is a center of electrical or magnetic energy which turns into heat as well as other things on reaching here, becomes plausible and throws some spice of illusion into the doctrine that our sun is a mass of burning matter.

The atom and the molecule are very influential words. They are constantly used by people claiming to follow science. Yet no one ever saw an atom or molecule. They are accepted as facts by science—just as the spiritually-inclined accept the existence of the invisible soul—yet it is impossible to objectively prove either the

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NOTE.—This article is collated from the writings of William Q. Judge.

one or the other. They are deemed to be proven because they are necessary.

But let a student of the Wisdom Religion say that reincarnation is a fact, and Mahatmas also, because both are necessary in evolution, and at once a demand arises for "demonstration" by objective proofs.

Unless we deny the immortality of man and the existence of soul, there are no sound arguments against the doctrine of preexistence and rebirth save such as rest on the dictum that each soul is a new creation. This dictum can be supported only by blind dogmatism, for given a soul we must sooner or later arrive at the theory of rebirth, because even if each soul is new on this earth it must keep on living somewhere after passing away, and in view of the known order of nature will have other bodies in other planets or spheres. But for any intelligent person nowadays to accept the special-creation theory, with birth into the present life as the beginning of man, is to confess the whole problem of life to be incomprehensible and all its mysteries incapable of solution. With shaded eyes and bated breath all such continually ask, *"What does it all mean?"*

The soul's immortality—believed in by the mass of humanity—demands embodiment here or elsewhere, and to be embodied means reincarnation. If we come to this earth but for a few years and then go to some other, the soul must be embodied there as well as here, and if we have traveled from some other world we must have had there too our proper vesture. The powers of mind and the laws governing its motion, its attachment, and its detachment, show that its reembodiment must be here, where it moved and worked, until such time as the mind is able to overcome the forces which chain it to this globe. To permit the involved entity to transfer itself to another scene of action before it had overcome all the causes drawing it here and without its having worked out its responsibilities to other entities in the same stream of evolution would be unjust and contrary to the powerful occult laws and forces which continually operate upon it. The early Christian Fathers saw this, and taught that the soul had fallen into matter and was obliged by the law of its nature to toil upward again to the place from which it came.

Each human being has a definite character different from every other human being, and masses of beings aggregated into nations show as wholes that the national force and distinguishing peculiari-

ties go to make up a definite and separate national character. These differences, both individual and national, are due to essential character and not to education. Even the doctrine of the survival of the fittest should show this, for the fitness cannot come from nothing but must at last show itself from the coming to the surface of the actual inner character. And as both individuals and nations among those who are ahead in the struggle with nature exhibit an immense force in their character, we must find a place and time where the force was evolved. These, Theosophy says, are this earth and the whole period during which the human race has been on the planet.

So, then, while heredity has something to do with the difference in character as to force and morals, swaying the soul and mind a little and furnishing also the appropriate place for receiving reward and punishment, it is not the cause for the essential nature shown by every one.

But all these differences, such as those shown by babes from birth, by adults as character comes forth more and more, and by nations in their history, are due to long experience gained during many lives on earth, are the outcome of the soul's own evolution. A survey of one short human life gives no ground for the production of his inner nature.

It is needful that each soul should have all possible experience, and one life cannot give this even under the best conditions. It would be folly for the Almighty to put us here for such a short time, only to remove us just when we had begun to see the object of life and the possibilities in it. The mere selfish desire of a person to escape the trials and discipline of life is not enough to set nature's laws aside, so the soul must be reborn until it has ceased to set in motion the cause of rebirth, after having developed character up to its possible limit as indicated by all the varieties of human nature, when every experience has been passed through, and not until all of truth that can be known has been acquired.

The vast disparity among men in respect to capacity compels us, if we wish to ascribe justice to Nature or to God, to admit reincarnation and to trace the origin of the disparity back to the past lives of the Ego. For people are as much hindered and handicapped, abused and made the victims of seeming injustice because of limited capacity, as they are by reason of circumstances of birth or education. We see the uneducated rising above circumstances of family and training, and often those born in good families have very small

capacity; but the troubles of nations and families arise from want of capacity more than from any other cause. And if we consider savage races only, there the seeming injustice is enormous. For many savages have good actual brain capacity, but still are savage. This is because the Ego in that body is still savage and undeveloped, for in contrast to the savage there are many civilized men with small actual brain force who are not savage in nature because the indwelling Ego has had long experience in civilization during other lives, and being a more developed soul has power to use the brain instrument to its highest limit.

Each man feels and knows that he has an individuality of his own, a personal identity which bridges over not only the gaps made by sleep but also those sometimes supervening on temporary lesions in the brain. This identity never breaks from beginning to end of life in the normal person, and only the persistence and eternal character of the soul will account for it.

So, ever since we began to remember, we know that our personal identity has not failed us, no matter how bad may be our memory. This disposes of the argument that identity depends on recollection, for the reason that if it did depend alone on recollection we should each day have to begin over again, as we cannot remember the events of the past in detail, and some minds remember but little yet feel their personal identity. And as it is often seen that some who remember the least insist as strongly as the others on their personal identity, that persistence of feeling must come from the old and immortal soul.

Viewing life and its probable object, with all the varied experience possible for man, one must be forced to the conclusion that a single life is not enough for carrying out all that is intended by Nature to say nothing of what man himself desires to do. The scale of variety in experience is enormous. There is a vast range of powers latent in man which we see may be developed if opportunity be given. Knowledge infinite in scope and diversity lies before us, and especially in these days when special investigation is the rule. We perceive that we have high aspirations with no time to reach up to their measure, while the great troop of passions and desires, selfish motives and ambitions, war with us and among themselves, pursuing us even to the door of death. All these have to be tried, conquered, used, subdued. One life is not enough for this.

To say that we have but one life here with such possibilities put

before us and impossible of development is to make the universe and life a huge joke perpetrated by a powerful God who is thus accused, by those who believe in a special creation of souls, of triumphing and playing with puny man just because that man is small and the creature of the Almighty. A human life at most is seventy years; statistics reduce this to about forty; and out of that little remainder a large part is spent in sleep and another in childhood. Thus in one life it is perfectly impossible to attain to the merest fraction of what Nature evidently has in view. We see many truths vaguely which a life gives us no time to grasp, and especially is this so when men have to make such a struggle to live at all. Our faculties are small or dwarfed or weak; one life gives no opportunity to alter this; we perceive other powers latent in us that cannot possibly be brought out in such a small space of time; and we have much more than a suspicion that the extent of the field of truth is vastly greater than the narrow circle we are confined to. It is not reasonable to suppose that either God or nature projects us into a body simply to fill us with bitterness because we have no other opportunity here, but rather we must conclude that a series of incarnations has led to the present condition, and that the process of coming here again and again must go on for the purpose of affording us the opportunity needed.

The mere fact of dying is not of itself enough to bring about development of faculties or the elimination of wrong tendency and inclinations. If we assume that upon entering heaven we at once acquire all knowledge and purity, then that state after death is reduced to a dead level and life itself with all its disciplines is shorn of every meaning. Some of the churches teach of a school of discipline after death where it is stated that the Apostles themselves, well known to be ignorant men, are to be the teachers. This is absurd and devoid of any basis or reason in the natural order. Besides, if there is to be such subsequent discipline, why were we projected into life at all? And why after the suffering and the error committed are we taken from the place where we did our acts? The only solution left is in reincarnation. We come back to earth because on it and with the beings upon it our deeds were performed; because it is the only proper place where punishment and reward can be justly meted out; because here is the only natural spot in which to continue the struggle toward perfection, toward the development of the faculties we have and the destruction of the wickedness in us. Justice to our-

selves and to all other beings demands it, for we cannot live for ourselves, and it would be unjust to permit some of us to escape, leaving those who were participants with us to remain on to be plunged into a hell of eternal duration.

The persistence of savagery, the rise and decay of nations and civilizations, the total extinction of nations, all demand an explanation found nowhere but in reincarnation. Savagery remains because there are still Egos whose experience is so limited that they are still savage; they will come up into higher races when ready. Races die out because the Egos have had enough of the experience that sort of race gives. So we find the red Indian, the Hottentot, the Easter Islanders, and others as examples of races deserted by high Egos, and, as they are dying away, other souls who have had no higher life in the past enter into the bodies of the race to go on using them for the purpose of gaining such experience as the race body will give. A race could not possibly arise and then suddenly go out. We see that such is not the case, but science has no explanation; it simply says that this is the fact, that nations decay. But in this explanation no account is taken of the inner man nor of the recondite, subtle and occult laws that unite to make a race.

The energy drawn together has to expand itself gradually, and therefore the reproduction of bodies of the character of that race will go on, though the Egos are not compelled to inhabit bodies of that sort any longer than while they are of the same development as the race. Hence a time comes when the whole mass of Egos which built up the race leaves it for another physical environment more like themselves. The economy of Nature will not permit the physical race to suddenly fade away, and so in the real order of evolution other and less progressed Egos come in and use the forms provided, keeping up the production of new bodies, but less and less in number each century. These lower Egos are not able to keep up to the limit of the capacity of the congeries of energies left by the other Egos, and so while the new set gains as much experience as is possible the race in time dies out after passing through its decay.

This is the explanation of what we may call descending savagery, and no other theory will meet the facts. It has been sometimes thought by ethnologists that the more civilized races kill off the other, but the fact is that in consequence of the great difference between the Egos inhabiting the old race body and the energy of that body itself, the females begin to be sterile, and thus slowly but

surely the number of deaths exceed the births. China itself is in process of decay, she being now in the almost stationary stage just before the rush downward. Great civilizations like those of Egypt and Babylon have gone because the souls who made them have long ago reincarnated in the great conquering nations of Europe and the present American continents. As nations and races they have been totally reincarnated and born again for greater and higher purposes than ever. Of all the old races the Aryan Indian alone yet remains as the preserver of the old doctrines. It will one day rise again to its old heights of glory.

The appearance of geniuses and great minds in families destitute of these qualities, as well as the extinction from a family of the genius shown by some ancestor, can only be met by the law of rebirth. Napoleon the First came in a family wholly unlike him in power and force. Nothing in his heredity will explain his character. He said himself, as told in the Memoirs of Prince Talleyrand, that he was Charlemagne. Only by assuming for him a long series of lives giving the right line of evolution or cause for his mind and nature and force to be brought out, can we have the slightest idea why he or any other great genius appeared at all.

Mozart when an infant could compose orchestral score. This was not due to heredity, for such a score is not natural, but is forced, mechanical, and wholly conventional, yet he understood it without schooling. How? Because he was a musician reincarnated, with a musical brain furnished by his family and thus not impeded in his endeavors to show forth his musical knowledge. But stronger yet is the case of Blind Tom, a negro whose family could not by any possibility have a knowledge of the piano, a modern instrument, so as to transmit that knowledge to the atoms of his body, yet he had great musical power and knew the present mechanical musical scale on the piano. There are hundreds of examples like these among the many prodigies who have appeared to the world's astonishment. In India there are many histories of sages born with complete knowledge of philosophy and the life, and doubtless in all nations the same can be met with.

What is called talent is usually a partial and unsymmetrical awakening of the soul from the dominion of the senses. Talent does with ease that which mediocrity accomplishes with great difficulty, if at all. In the ordinary life of the world nothing short of real genius carries man out of himself and suggests the real nature of his being.

Genius does with ease that of which mediocrity never even dreams, and of which no mere talent is capable. Genius dreams of the true, and gets glimpses of the essential being. Mediocrity follows; talent commands; genius knows and seldom stops to reason.

This bringing back of knowledge also explains instinct, for that is no more than recollection divisible into physical and mental memory. It is seen in the child and the animal, and is no more than the result of previous experience. And whether we look at the newborn babe flinging out its arms for self-protection, or the animal with very strong instinctual power, or the bee building a cell on the rules of geometry, it is all the effect of reincarnation acting either in the mind or physical cell, for no atom is devoid of life, consciousness, and intelligence of its own.

In the case of the musician Bach we have proof that heredity counts for nothing if the Ego is not advanced, for his genius was not borne down his family line; it gradually faded out, finally leaving the family stream entirely. So, too, the coming of idiots or vicious children to parents who are good, pure, or highly intellectual is explained in the same way. They are cases where heredity is set at nought by a wholly bad or deficient Ego.

And, lastly, the fact that certain inherent ideas are common to the whole race is explained by the sages as due to recollection of such ideas, which were implanted in the human mind at the very beginning of its evolutionary career on this planet by those brothers and sages who learned their lessons and were perfected in former ages long before the development of this globe began. No explanation for inherent ideas is offered by science that will do more than say, "they exist." These were actually taught to the mass of Egos who are engaged in this earth's evolution; they were imprinted or burned into their natures, and always recollected; they follow the Ego through the long pilgrimage.

It has been often thought that the opposition to reincarnation has been solely based on prejudice, when not due to a dogma which can only stand when the mind is bound down and prevented from using its own powers. It is a doctrine the most noble of all, and with its companion one of Karma, it alone gives the basis for ethics.

letters • questions • comment

Theosophy is such an all-encompassing study, its literature is so large and much of it so difficult, should not the serious student withdraw from the world in order to devote himself the better to its study?

Of course, the only person really qualified to say what anyone "should do" is the one considering the action, since he must accept responsibility for its results, and is also the only one able to discern the quality of its underlying motivation. Yet the question is worth considering in general, for if Theosophy is really of unique and primary value in the world, then there can hardly be anything more important than its study. In what, then, should such study consist, and how ought it to be carried out?

The mastery of any branch of knowledge depends upon how much of one's self the learner is willing and able to give to its pursuit. This is as much a question of motive as of practice. Steadiness of practice does not appear simultaneously with the desire for it. But desire inspires practice, and single-minded effort reinforces desire, so that the long-range result may be what Mr. Judge called a lifetime's meditation.

But if Theosophy is knowledge which excludes no facet of life, then some special qualifications would seem to be required of the student. An undertaking so broad in scope should be matched by a generally open-minded attitude which habitually reaches out toward life, rejecting no experience as lacking in at least the raw material of knowledge. This attitude would involve humility, since pride can effectively obscure the subtler lessons that come to us in disguise. The task of mastering the knowledge of all life might also require what seems a devil-may-care courage as well—that is, the willingness to resign all stake in results, and the readiness to dare, even at great personal cost. Again, study is not a casual pastime, and may not be pursued sporadically with the same results as those which come from continuous effort. On the other hand, mobilizing all the forces of human nature in the service of a single cause cannot be

accomplished simply by main force. And there is sometimes a pressing need for shutting out all intrusive experience. Perhaps an unappreciated value of commitment is that it draws us back again and again to our original purpose, no matter how often we are carried into bypaths in our efforts to distinguish the real from the unreal. If our commitment is to the highest aspect of ourselves, which is the Self of all, such protection could span lifetimes. These seem the possibilities presented by Mr. Judge in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita,* when he wrote (p. 155): "Arjuna was equal-minded in pain or pleasure, joy or sorrow, and ready to suffer or enjoy whatever the Higher Self had in store for him by way of experience or discipline."

If no experience is without value to the earnest student, how should he choose among all those that beckon? There must be some which, though easily available, are not desirable—not "pleasing to Ishwara." If we are beings with an immense past, and bearers of much unexpended Karma, the experiences which come to us under law may be met with an attitude of "attentive expectancy," and may turn out to be quite sufficient to our needs. For these, surely, are the ones we are most fitted by internal and external conditions to profit by. And if one endeavors to meet them with a sustained desire to be of service to others, whatever his current activities, it is reasonable to think that his personal Karma will increasingly precipitate in a manner that both facilitates and strengthens this desire.

Indeed, since this is a sevenfold universe, wouldn't studying the world and seeking to discover its needs ultimately amount to the same thing? Yet the means to this end, while apparently obvious, are often on closer scrutiny seen to be clothed in illusion. The most truly human need must be for recognition of the fundamental identity of all beings. A passage from *The Secret Doctrine* shows why this is not sentiment but the only reality that gives anything its meaning:

> The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyan Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptation of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds—this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science.

So this must be the ultimate source of philanthropic feeling. But feeling is not enough. If our will to do good is not to become cor-

rupted by the perceptions of separateness around us, two things become, sooner or later, absolutely necessary: useful self-sacrifice and study of ourselves as microcosms of the macrocosm. The relevance of both may be intimated from a comment by Tolstoi:

> It is very easy to take a child away from a prostitute, or from a beggar. It is very easy, when one has money, to have him washed, cleaned and dressed in good clothes, fed up, and even taught various sciences; but for us who do not earn our own bread, it is not only difficult to teach him to earn his bread, it is impossible; because by our example, and even by those material improvements of his life which cost us nothing, we teach the opposite.

The mysteries of the human heart have for ages been the study of those who devote themselves to the progress of humanity, and the fruits of that study have been made available to those filled with desire to serve the same cause. So some comparative withdrawal for the purpose of study may be a necessity, too. Perhaps these alternations are under cyclic law, the law governing patterns of longer and shorter duration, so that one may eventually find it natural to be fully and usefully occupied in the outside world, yet also develop unostentatious means of withdrawal to renew the springs of inspiration. Or perhaps reflection might even be concurrent with action in some respects. The scene of the *Gita* is a battlefield.

The value of Theosophy in providing such guidelines is made clear in H.P.B.'s article "Is Theosophy a Religion?"

> Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal "coach," a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves*, instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHEME

SATAN: *Lucifer*

ELIPHAS LÉVI seeks to explain the dogma of his Church by paradoxes and metaphors, but succeeds very poorly in the face of the many volumes written by pious Roman Catholic demonologists under the approbation and auspices of Rome, in this nineteenth century of ours. For the true Roman Catholic, the devil or Satan is *a reality;* the drama enacted in the sidereal light according to the seer of Patmos—who desired, perhaps, to improve upon the narrative in the "Book of Enoch"—is as real, and as historical a fact as any other allegory and symbolical event in the Bible. But the Initiates give an explanation which differs from that given by Eliphas Lévi, whose genius and crafty intellect had to submit to a certain compromise dictated to him from Rome.

Thus, the true and *uncompromising* Kabalists admit that, for all purposes of Science and philosophy, it is enough that the profane should know that the great magic agent called by the followers of the Marquis de St. Martin—the Martinists—astral light, by the mediæval Kabalists and Alchemists the Sidereal Virgin and the *Mysterium Magnum,* and by the Eastern Occultists Æther, the reflection of *Akâsa*—is that which the Church calls *Lucifer*. That the Latin scholastics have succeeded in transforming the universal soul and Pleroma, the *vehicle of Light* and the receptacle of all the forms, a force spread throughout the whole Universe, with its direct and indirect effects, into Satan and his works, is no news to any one. But now they are prepared to give out to the above-mentioned profane even the secrets hinted at by Eliphas Lévi without *adequate explanation;* for the latter's policy of veiled revelations could only lead to further superstition and misunderstanding. What, indeed, can a student of Occultism, a *beginner*, gather from the following highly poetical sentences of Eliphas Lévi, as apocalyptic as the writings of any of the Alchemists?

> *Lucifer*, the Astral Light . . . is an intermediate force existing in all creation, it serves to create and to destroy, and the Fall of

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NOTE.—"The Christian Scheme," begun in November, 1967, is collated from the works of H. P. Blavatsky. It recounts the historical background and early development of Christianity. This issue from: "Is Pleroma Satan's Lair?" (*S.D.* II, 506-15).

> Adam was an erotic intoxication which has rendered his generation a slave to this fatal light . . . every sexual passion that overpowers our senses is a whirlwind of that light which seeks to drag us towards the abyss of death, Folly. Hallucinations, visions, extasies are all forms of a very dangerous excitation due to this *interior phosphorus* (?). Thus light, finally, is of the nature of fire, the intelligent use of which warms and vivifies, and the excess of which, on the contrary, dissolves and annihilates. Thus man is called upon to assume a sovereign empire over that (astral) light and conquer thereby his immortality, and is threatened at the same time with being intoxicated, absorbed, and eternally destroyed by it. This light, therefore, inasmuch as it is devouring, revengeful, and fatal, would thus really be hell-fire, the serpent of the legend; the tormented errors of which it is full, the tears and the gnashing of teeth of the abortive beings it devours, the phantom of life that escapes them, and seems to mock and insult their agony, all this would be the devil or Satan indeed. (*Histoire de la Magie, p.* 197).

There is no *wrong* statement in all this; nothing save a superabundance of ill-applied metaphors, as in the application of Adam—a *myth*—to the illustration of the astral effects. *Akâsa*—the astral light[1]—can be defined in a few words; it is the universal Soul, the Matrix of the Universe, the "Mysterium Magnum" from which all that exists is born by separation or *differentiation.* It is the cause of existence; it fills all the infinite Space; *is Space itself,* in one sense, or both its *Sixth* and Seventh principles.[2] But as the finite in the Infinite, as regards manifestation, this light must have its shadowy side—as already remarked. And as the infinite can never be manifested, hence the finite world has to be satisfied with the *shadow alone,* which its actions draw upon humanity and which men attract *and force to activity.* Hence, while it is the *universal Cause* in its unmanifested unity and infinity, the Astral light becomes, with

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[1] *Akâsa* is *not* the Ether of Science, as some Orientalists translate it.

[2] Says Johannes, Tritheim, the Abbot of Spanheim, the greatest astrologer and Kabalist of his day:—"The art of divine magic consists in the ability to perceive the essence of things in the light of nature (astral light), and by using the soul-powers of the spirit to produce material things from the unseen universe, and in such operations the Above and the Below must be brought together and made to act harmoniously. The spirit of Nature (astral light) is a unity, creating and forming everything, and acting through the instrumentality of man it may produce wonderful things. Such processes take place according to law. You will learn the law by which these things are accomplished, if you learn to know yourself. You will know it by the power of the spirit that is in yourself, and accomplish it by mixing your spirit with the essence that comes out of yourself. If you wish to succeed in such a work you must know how to separate Spirit and Life in Nature, and, moreover, to separate the astral soul in yourself and to make it tangible, and then the substance of the soul will appear visibly and tangibly rendered objective by the power of the spirit."—(Quoted in Dr. Hartman's *Paracelsus.*)

regard to Mankind, simply the effects of the causes produced by men in their sinful lives. It is not its bright denizens—whether they are called Spirits of Light or Darkness—that produce Good or Evil, but mankind itself that determines the unavoidable action and reaction in the great magic agent. It is mankind which has become the "Serpent of Genesis," and thus causes daily and hourly the Fall and sin of the "Celestial Virgin"—which thus becomes the Mother of gods and devils at one and the same time; for she is the ever-loving, beneficent deity to all those who stir her *Soul and heart,* instead of attracting to themselves her shadowy manifested essence, called by Eliphas Lévi—"the fatal light" which kills and destroys. Humanity, in its units, can overpower and master its effects; but only by the holiness of their lives and by producing good causes. It has power only on the manifested *lower* principles—the shadow of the Unknown and Incognizable Deity. But in antiquity and *reality,* Lucifer, or *Luciferus,* is the name of the angelic Entity presiding over the *light of truth* as over the light of the day. In the great Valentinian gospel *Pistis Sophia* (§ 361) it is taught that of the three Powers emanating from the Holy names of the Three, that of Sophia (the Holy Ghost according to these gnostics—the most cultured of all), resides in the planet Venus or Lucifer.

Thus to the profane, the Astral Light may be God and Devil at once—*Demon est Deus inversus*: that is to say, through every point of Infinite Space thrill the magnetic and electrical currents of *animate Nature*, the life-giving and death-giving waves, for death on earth becomes life on another plane. *Lucifer* is divine and terrestrial light, the "Holy Ghost" and "Satan," at one and the same time, *visible* Space being truly filled with the differentiated Breath invisibly; and the Astral Light, the manifested effects of the two who are one, guided and attracted by ourselves, is the *Karma* of humanity, both a personal and impersonal entity: personal, because it is the mystic name given by St. Martin to the Host of divine Creators, guides and rulers of this planet; *impersonal*, as the Cause and effect of universal Life and Death.

The *Fall* was the *result of man's knowledge*, for his "eyes were opened." Indeed, he was taught Wisdom and the hidden knowledge by the "Fallen Angel," for the latter had become from that day his *Manas*, Mind and Self-consciousness. In each of us that golden thread of continuous life—periodically broken into active and passive cycles of sensuous existence on Earth, and super-sensuous in

Devachan—*is* from the beginning of our appearance upon this earth. It is the *Sutrâtma,* the luminous thread of immortal *impersonal* monadship, on which our earthly lives or evanescent *Egos* are strung as so many beads—according to the beautiful expression of Vedantic philosophy.

And now it stands proven that Satan, or the Red *Fiery* Dragon, the "Lord of Phosphorus" (brimstone was a theological improvement), and *Lucifer,* or "Light-Bearer," is in us: it is our *Mind*—our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Saviour from pure animalism. Without this principle—the emanation of the very essence of the pure divine principle *Mahat* (Intelligence), which radiates direct from the *Divine mind*—we would be surely no better than animals. The first man Adam was made only a *living soul* (nephesh), the last Adam was made a *quickening Spirit,*[3] says Paul, his words referring to the building or *Creation* of man. Without this *quickening* spirit, or *human Mind* or soul, there would be no difference between man and beast; as there is none, in fact, between animals with respect to their actions. The tiger and the donkey, the hawk and the dove, are each one as pure and as innocent as the other, because *irresponsible.* Each follows its instinct, the tiger and the hawk killing with the same unconcern as the donkey eats a thistle, or the dove pecks at a grain of corn. If the Fall had the significance given to it by theology; if that fall occurred as a result of an act never intended by nature,—a *sin,* how about the animals? If we are told that they procreate their species in consequence of that same "original sin," for which God cursed the earth—hence everything living on it—we will put another question. We are told by theology, as by Science, that the animal was on earth far earlier than man? We ask the former: How did it *procreate its species,* before the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, of the Good and the Evil, had been plucked off? As said: "The Christians—far less clear-sighted than the great Mystic and Liberator whose name they have assumed, whose doctrines they have misunderstood and travestied, *and whose memory they have blackened by their deeds*—took the Jewish Jehovah as he was, and of course strove vainly to reconcile the *Gospel of Light and Liberty* with the Deity of Darkness and Sub-

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[3] The real original text of I Corinthians, rendered Kabalistically and esoterically would read (15:44-5): "It is sown a *soul body* (not 'natural' body), it is raised a *spirit* body." St. Paul was an Initiate, and his words have quite a different meaning when read esoterically. The body "is sown in *weakness* (passivity); it is raised in power" (43)—or in spirituality and intellect.

mission." (*War in Heaven.*)[4]

But, it is sufficiently proven now that all the *soi-disant* evil Spirits who are credited with having made war on the gods, are identical as personalities; moreover, that all the ancient religions taught the same tenet save the final conclusion, which latter differs from the Christian. The seven primeval gods had all a dual state, one essential, the other accidental. In their essential state they were all the "Builders" or *Fashioners,* the Preservers and the rulers of this world, and in the accidental state, clothing themselves in visible corporeality, they descended on the earth and reigned on it as Kings and Instructors of the lower Hosts, who had incarnated once more upon it as men.

Thus, esoteric philosophy shows that man is truly the manifested deity in both its aspects—good and evil, but theology cannot admit this philosophical truth. Teaching the dogma of the Fallen Angels in its dead-letter meaning, and having made of Satan the cornerstone and pillar of the dogma of redemption—to do so would be suicidal. Having once shown the rebellious angels *distinct from God and the Logos* in their personalities, the admission that the downfall of the *disobedient* Spirits meant simply their fall into generation and matter, would be equivalent to saying that God and Satan were identical. For since the LOGOS (or God) is the aggregate of that once divine Host accused of having fallen, it would follow that the Logos and Satan are one.

Yet such was the real philosophical view of the now disfigured tenet in antiquity. The *Verbum,* or the "Son," was shown in a dual

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[4] By Godolphin Mitford, later in life, Murad Ali Bey. Born in India, the son of a Missionary, G. Mitford was converted to Islam, and died a Mahomedan in 1884. He was a most extraordinary Mystic, of a great learning and remarkable intelligence. But he left the Right Path and forthwith fell under Karmic retribution. As well shown by the author of the article quoted "The followers of the defeated Elohim, first massacred by the victorious Jews (the Jehovites), and then persuaded by the victorious Christians and Mohamedans, continued nevertheless. . . . Some of these scattered sects have lost even the tradition of the true rationale of their belief—to worship in secrecy and mystery the Principle of Fire, Light, and Liberty. Why do the Sabean Bedouins (avowedly Monotheists when dwelling in the Mohamedan cities) in the solitude of the desert night yet invoke the starry 'Host of Heaven'? Why do the Yezidis, the 'Devil Worshippers,' worship the 'Muluk-Taoos'—The 'Lord Peacock'—the emblem of pride and of hundred-eyed intelligence (and of Initiation also), which was expelled from heaven with Satan, according to an old Oriental tradition? Why do the Gholaites and their kindred Mesopotamo-Iranian Mohamedan Sects believe in the 'Noor Illahee'—the Light of the Elohim—transmitted in *anastasis* through a hundred Prophet Leaders? It is because they have continued in ignorant superstition the traditional religion of the 'Light Deities whom Jahveh overthrew' (is *said* to have overthrown rather); for by overthrowing *them* he would have overthrown himself. The 'Muluk-Taoos'—is *Maluk*—'Ruler' as is shown in the foot-note. It is only a new form of Moloch, Melek, Molech, Malayak, and *Malachim*" —Messengers, Angels, etc.

aspect by the Pagan Gnostics—in fact, he was a *duality* in full *unity*. Hence, the endless and various national versions. The Greeks had Jupiter, the son of Chronos, the Father, who hurls him down into the depths of Kosmos. The Aryans had Brahmâ (in later theology) precipitated by Siva into the Abyss of Darkness, etc., etc. But the fall of all these Logoi and Demiurgi from their primitive exalted position, had in all cases one and the same esoteric signification in it; the *curse*—in its philosophical meaning—of being incarnated on this earth; an unavoidable rung on the ladder of cosmic evolution, a highly philosophical and fitting Karmic law, without which the presence of Evil on Earth would have to remain for ever a closed mystery to the understanding of true philosophy. To say, as the author of the *Esprits Tombés des Paiens* (p. 347) does, that since "Christianity is made to rest on two pillars, that of evil and of good; on two forces, in short: hence, if we suppress the punishment of the *evil forces,* the protecting mission of the good Powers will have neither value nor sense"—is to utter the most unphilosophical absurdity. If it fits in with, and explains Christian dogma, it obscures the facts and truths of the primitive wisdom of the ages. The cautious hints of Paul have all the true esoteric meaning, and it took centuries of scholastic casuistry to give them the present false colouring in their interpretation. The *verbum* and *Lucifer* are one in their dual aspect; and the "Prince of the Air" is not the "God of *that* period," but an everlasting principle. If the latter was said to be ever *circling* around the world, the great Apostle referred simply to the never-ceasing cycles of human incarnations, in which evil will ever predominate unto the day when Humanity is redeemed by the true divine Enlightenment which gives the correct perception of things. . . . The identity of thought and meaning is the one thing that strikes the student in all the religions which mention the tradition of the fallen Spirits, and in those greater religions there is not one that fails to mention and describe it in one or another form.

on the lookout

The Task of Education

A new book by Viktor Frankl, *The Will To Meaning* (New American Library, 1969), has this passage:

> Today we live in an age of crumbling and vanishing traditions. Thus, instead of new values being created by finding new meanings, the reverse happens. That is why ever more people are caught in feelings of aimlessness and emptiness or, as I am used to calling it, an existential vacuum. However, even if all universal values disappeared, life would remain meaningful, since the unique meanings remain untouched by the loss of traditions. To be sure, if man is to find meanings even in an era without values, he has to be equipped with the full capacity of conscience. It therefore stands to reason that in an age such as ours, that is to say, in an age of the existential vacuum, the foremost task of education, instead of being satisfied with transmitting traditions and knowledge, is to refine that capacity which allows man to find unique meanings. Today education cannot afford to proceed along the lines of tradition, but must elicit the ability to make independent and authentic decisions. In an age in which the Ten Commandments seem to lose their unconditional validity, man must learn more than ever to listen to the ten thousand commandments arising from the ten thousand unique situations of which his life consists. And as to *these* commandments, he is referred to, and must rely on, conscience. A lively and vivid conscience is also the only thing that enables man to resist the effects of the existential vacuum, namely, conformism and totalitarianism.

Conscience as Intuition

And what is conscience?

> Conscience could be defined as the intuitive capacity of man to find out the meaning of a situation. Since this meaning is something unique, it does not fall under a general law, and an intuitive capacity such as conscience is the only means to seize hold of meaning Gestalts.
>
> Apart from being intuitive, conscience is creative. Time and

> again, an individual's conscience commands him to do something which contradicts what is preached by the society to which the individual belongs, say, by his tribe.

Once-living dictates of conscience shaped the traditions that are now dying away because they have not been refreshed by continuous moral perception. An existential vacuum results, in which only the voice of conscience has meaning. Yet new traditions may be born from awakened conscience and feelings of responsibility. As Dr. Frankl says:

> In the final analysis the existential vacuum is a paradox. If we only broadened our horizon we would notice that we enjoy our freedom, but we are not yet fully aware of our responsibility. If we were, we would realize that there is plenty of meaning waiting to be fulfilled by us, be it with respect to underprivileged people or with respect to underdeveloped countries.
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> To be sure, we would have to begin by amplifying our concept of the oneness of man. What is at stake is not only the oneness of man but also the oneness of mankind.
>
> Thousands of years ago mankind developed monotheism. Today another step is due. I would call it monanthropism. Not the belief in one God but rather the awareness of the one mankind, the awareness of the unity of humanity; a unity in whose light the different colors of our skins would fade away.

Education for the Whole Child

George Leonard, West Coast editor of *Look,* has added his voice to that of many others who criticize present methods of education. The child, he says, consists of more than just a mind, and education should involve the total youngster—"his emotions, his senses, the whole body, not just the neck up." Mr. Leonard (*New York Post,* Jan. 14), adds that "schools have been filling children's brains with facts but have been turning out people ignorant of their own feelings and bodies." Since automation promises—it promises, but has not yet produced—a future with more leisure for all, and much less emphasis on the struggle to survive, Mr. Leonard would like to see the schools stress the development of individual potential and the discovery of "what it really means to be human." Once a child has learned the three R's, most of his time thereafter should be spent moving through a wide selection of materials on his own.

Something Is Missing

While such ideas are clearly reminiscent of some of H.P.B.'s statements on education in the *Key to Theosophy,* the question of

who and what a child is, in and of himself, remains unanswered. And the remedy for unrelieved concentration on academic studies —which is indeed cramping and distorting, as the late Herbert Read showed in his studies of child education many years ago— may be very difficult to determine without a clearer view of human identity than the title of Mr. Leonard's recent book, *Education and Ecstasy,* suggests. The blighting effects of an excess of "intellectual" subjects start showing at about the ages of eleven and twelve, and these distortions continue through adolescence, when, today, most of the revolts of the young have their beginning. Adolescence is also the time when idealism dawns, when there is a sudden impetus in the quest for meaning. What is wanted, quite plainly, is a conception of the Promethean mission in which all human beings are engaged, and education could then provide access to a vast array of challenges to the human resolve to know and to be of use.

Hardly Worth Notice

A recent book devoted to English dissenters from established opinion—*The London Heretics,* by Warren Sylvester Smith—has for its weakest and shallowest part a discussion of "Spiritualism and the London Theosophists." This section is the shallowest for the reason that its subject-matter, mainly the career of H. P. Blavatsky, is furtherest from the grasp of conventional authors who rely for their material on already published works explaining away both H. P. Blavatsky and Theosophy. The writer does not seem to have any animus against either one; he just repeats, often uncritically, what has been said by other writers who became enemies of the Theosophical Movement, and who disguised their partisan spirit and calumniating intentions with occasional pretense at scholarly apparatus. For Mr. Smith, H.P.B. is "brilliant, captivating, and dynamic," yet "neurotic," "impulsive," and probably addicted to hashish. He seems to accept John Symond's conclusion after review of Mme. Coulomb's accusations, to the effect that "Madame Blavatsky was one of the world's great jokers," and reports that the same charges disillusioned even Sinnett because he believed that the woman whom H.P.B. had befriended could not have invented "such clever forgeries." In short, the book is not really worth noticing.

"Her Works Remain"

As Mr. Judge wrote in an article published in *Lucifer* for December, 1893:

> In the years that are gone, necessity existed for repelling mean personal attacks on H. P. Blavatsky's character. To take up arms in her behalf was then wise. Now her works remain. The necessity for constant repulse of attacks on her does not exist. Judgment can be used in doing so. Loyalty is not thrown to the winds when good judgment says there is no need to reply. One of the best replies is to carry on the work in the noble and altruistic spirit she always pointed out. Take for instance, the almost senile attacks periodically made by the Society for Psychical Research. What good can possibly be accomplished by paying any attention to them? None at all, except what results to that body by inflating it with the idea that its shafts have hit a vulnerable spot. Ever since their *ex post facto* agent went to India to play at psychical investigation they have almost lived by their attacks, for by them, more than anything else, they gain some attention; her personality, even to this day, adds spice to their wide-of-the-mark discussions.

So, today, quite ordinary writers are still able to make capital out of long discredited attacks on H. P. Blavatsky, sufficient to break into print with the same old shabby stories and lies. These writers sometimes look at a lot of books for source material, but they cite chiefly the volumes of her bitterest enemies and the most careless compilers. Defenses of her are either ridiculed, minimized, or ignored, usually the latter. To all such writers, there is the reply by Mr. Judge: "her works remain."

Problems, Problems

Much attention has been given to the problems of survival in outer space for extended periods of time. But according to the *Medical Tribune* (Jan. 9), the problems of returning astronauts to normal life on earth are likely to be just as grave, because of the body's adjustment to conditions in "space." Dr. Otto H. Gauer of the Physiological Institute of the Free University of Berlin told an international symposium on space problems:

> It has been observed that space pilots have a tendency toward circulatory collapse when they stand upright after returning to earth. This is part of a complex including loss of blood volume, loss of weight, and loss of bone minerals. Under present conditions, if you stay in space, you adapt to weightlessness. You need only a small blood volume and you have little use for your legs and arms. You will be fine until you return to earth and must become a Homo Sapiens again.

> It cannot be predicted how long you can stay in space before the adaptation is so considerable that you cannot come back into a gravitational field without great hazard, or whether it may become impossible.
>
> The basic human architecture becomes obsolete. There is a tendency to become another animal, a type of free-floating plankton. It is significant that there is great similarity between plankton forms and the spacecraft design by modern engineers.

A Different Matter

The scientists will doubtless attack these problems with the enthusiasm usual in space projects and devise some palliatives, if not actual solutions. But a footnote in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 497) may be suggestive in this connection, if read between the lines:

> "Trans-solar space," writes the great Humboldt, "does not hitherto show any phenomenon analogous to our solar system. It is a peculiarity of *our* System, that matter should have condensed within it in nebulous rings, the nuclei of which condense into earths and moons. I say again, heretofore, *nothing of the kind has ever been observed beyond our planetary system.*" (*See Revue Germanique of the 31st Dec. 1860, art. "Lettres et conversations d'Alexandre Humboldt."*) True, that since 1860 the nebular theory has sprung up, and being better known, a few identical phenomena were *supposed* to be observed beyond the solar system. Yet the great man is quite right; and no *earths* or *moons* can be found—*except in appearance*—beyond, or of the same order of matter as found in our system. Such is the Occult teaching.

Moon-Struck?

Well, it seems certain that the outer space so far penetrated by the astronauts is not really "outer," so far as our solar system is concerned, yet there is still the serious question, Theosophically speaking, of whether there can be any real future in interplanetary travel for mankind while there remains so much unfinished business here on earth. The hungers of more than half the population of the world remain unsatisfied, and even if something besides national vanity or military considerations are involved in the "conquest" of space, the curious fascination exercised by the moon may be an indication of whether or not the exploits of the astronauts are actually regressive, instead of representing a great "scientific" advance, from a truly evolutionary point of view. What good can "a free-floating plankton" way out there do for the human race? Reading *Genesis* to each other may while away the astronauts' hours between

meals, but their main objective, if Dr. Gauer is to be believed, should be to hurry safely home.

Biography of Jesus

An archeologist, Wendell Phillips, has uncovered evidence that Jesus, believed by Gospel tradition to have died at about thirty years of age, was actually close to fifty. (San Francisco *Examiner and Chronicle,* Jan. 19.) Phillips' biography of Jesus, forthcoming later this year, is based on the Dead Sea Scrolls and other New Testament research. The report relates:

> "Jesus was certainly familiar with the teachings of the Essene sect, to whom the scrolls are ascribed, and so was John the Baptist," he [Mr. Phillips] said.
>
> Based on a little known reference to Jesus as "not yet 50" at the time of his crucifixion and on other evidence he has uncovered, Phillips disputes the traditional gospel view that he died at 30. The archeologist noted that Jesus was always known as Jesus of Nazareth and there is "good evidence" that he was born there, not Bethlehem.

Peter not Pope

> Phillips believes that Jesus was tried and crucified as a Zealot, a member of a militant band of activists who wanted to overthrow the Romans and re-establish the Kingdom of Israel, and that one or more of his disciples were Zealots or at least men of violent disposition.
>
> If the early Christian church had a pope, it was not Peter but Christ's brother James who provided leadership from Jerusalem for Christian communities such as that headed by Peter in Antioch, Phillips asserts.
>
> "Those interested in the Bible should pay attention to the Gospel of John," said Phillips. "I believe more and more in the historicity of John. I think the author lived and wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and if the gospel is not by John the beloved disciple, then it can at least be attributed to him."

Gnostic Sources

In a footnote in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 135), H. P. Blavatsky comments on a passage in the *Codex Nazareus*:

> The statement, if reliable, would show that Jesus was between fifty and sixty years old when baptized; for the Gospels make him but a few months younger than John. The kabalists say that Jesus was over forty years old when first appearing at the gates of Jerusalem. The present copy of the "Codex Nazareus" is dated in the year 1042, but Dunlap finds in Irenaeus (2d cen-

> tury) quotations from and ample references to this book. "The basis of the material common to Irenaeus and the "Codex Nazareus" must be at least as early as the first century," says the author in his preface to "Sod, and the Son of the Man," p. i.

Elsewhere in *Isis* (II, 2), Madame Blavatsky remarks that the Gospel according to John was written by an "anonymous Gnostic," and in a footnote in *The Secret Doctrine* she calls the *Pistis Sophia* "an extremely important document, a genuine *Evangel* of the Gnostics." While the claim that Jesus was a militant who wanted to "overthrow the Romans" may be a calumny spread by orthodox enemies fearful of his influence, it seems evident that Mr. Phillips' findings are consistent with the prediction made on page 38 of Vol. I of *Isis Unveiled.*

Strange Epidemic

The report in the A.M.A. *Journal* for Nov. 18, 1968, of the sudden onset of a usually fatal disease among the people—some 35,000—living in a small area of New Guinea amounts to a footnote documenting a statement made in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 799-80). H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

> It is a most suggestive fact—to those concrete thinkers who demand a *physical* proof of Karma—that the lowest races of men are now rapidly dying out; a phenomenon largely due to an extraordinary sterility setting in among the women, from the time that they were first approached by the Europeans.

The disease affecting the inhabitants of South Fore, in New Guinea, is called "Kuru," and is said to have been infrequent two or three generations ago. Yet only six years after it was first reported it was possible to make detailed studies for over a thousand patients dying from its effects. The disease seems to be limited to women and children, since adult males are almost never attacked. Curiously, its rapid spread is among members of tribes most given to cannibalism, and has declined with suppression of this practice. Physicians have been otherwise unable to stem the epidemic, finding that antibiotics and other drugs used in treatment are either useless or even accelerate the course of the disease. Research medical men believe that solving the mystery will throw light on other diseases to which Kuru seems related, such as multiple sclerosis, Huntington's chorea, aspects of cancer, and hepatitis.

Not only Colonial Abuse

No doubt a subtler logic would connect the degenerative diseases

of a decadent civilization with the afflictions of dying races, if the connection between the psychic and physiological aspects of human life were better understood. Meanwhile, on the general pattern of cyclic rise and fall, there is this comment by Madame Blavatsky:

> A process of decimation is taking place all over the globe, among those races, whose "time is up"—among just those stocks, be it remarked, which esoteric philosophy regards as the senile representatives of lost archaic nations. It is inaccurate to maintain that the extinction of a lower race is *invariably* due to cruelties or abuses perpetrated by colonists. Change of diet, drunkenness, etc., etc., have done much; but those who rely on such data as offering an all-sufficient explanation of the crux, cannot meet the phalanx of facts now so closely arrayed. "Nothing," says even the materialist Lefèvre, "can save *those that have run their course*. . . . It would be necessary to extend their *destined cycle*. . . . *The peoples that have been most spared . . . Hawaiians or Maories, have been no less decimated than the tribes massacred or tainted by European intrusion.*"

"Fifth Essence" in Food

The "lightest part" of food, the *Chhandogya Upanishad* states, "becomes Mind." A shadowed realization of this aspect of nutrition seems implicit in the recent report (Los Angeles *Times,* Dec. 12, 1968) of various experiments with animals, suggesting that inadequate prenatal diet results in offspring with mental deficiencies which are sometimes "permanent and irreversible." While animal experiments cannot be conclusive for man, it is pointed out that their results are consistent with the sociological finding that early malnutrition impairs the learning potential and alters behavior patterns in humans. What has been called the "lethargy of malnutrition" is known to obstruct the efforts of those who try to help the poor to help themselves. It is of equal interest, Theosophically, that the crucial ingredients of food are found by nutritionists to be such substances as vitamins, trace-minerals, and even radioactive isotopes—all of which may be appropriately regarded as the "lightest part" of foods.

Small Theological Problem

According to a study of religious beliefs in twelve nations, conducted by Gallup Poll International, there has been a striking increase in belief in an after-life throughout the world, during the past twenty years. The poll compares opinions held in 1948 with those expressed last year. The United States now leads the world, the

study shows, in belief in a life after death, with three out of four Americans affirming this faith. However, Americans (60%) are second only to Greeks (67%) in belief in the devil! In fact, the figures are a bit bewildering, since 65% of Americans say they believe in hell, which suggests that 5% of them imagine hell without a ruler, while 62% of the Greeks accept the reality of infernal regions, meaning, in turn, that 5% of the Greeks believe in a homeless devil. These anomalies inspire a certain distrust in the Gallup compilation. Meanwhile, there is an interesting difference between the *New York Times* (Dec. 26, 1968) account of the Gallup findings and the summary offered by the *Ottawa Citizen* (Jan. 22, 1969). The Canadian paper gives more attention to the poll's results concerning belief in reincarnation than to any other part of the report—yet reincarnation is not even mentioned by the *Times*. Curiously, Roman Catholics are especially strong in the number of believers in reincarnation.

Canada Leads

Following is the *Ottawa Citizen* summary:

> While only 26 per cent of the Canadian public holds that reincarnation exists, Canada is highest among nations surveyed with this belief. Roman Catholics (39 per cent) in this country have almost twice the proportion with this viewpoint, as compared to Protestants (19 per cent) and almost three times that of other faiths (14 per cent).
>
> The table below contrasts national attitudes on reincarnation:

	Yes	No	No opinion
Canada	26%	53%	21%
West Germany	25	54	21
France	23	62	15
Greece	22	60	18
Austria	20	73	7
United States	20	64	16
Great Britain	18	52	30
Norway	14	57	29
Sweden	12	72	16
Netherlands	10	55	35

Whatever the policy of the *New York Times* in reporting such matters, it seems evident that belief in reincarnation has made great headway, since it was almost entirely unknown a hundred years ago, in the West.